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Second regular session of 1991
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

Assistance to the Palestinian People

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 43/178 of 20 December 1988, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to charge the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) with the supervision of the development of the programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to report to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in implementing the resolution. Pursuant to this resolution, the Secretary-General submitted a report on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/45/503) to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

2. Following its consideration of the Secretary-General's report, the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/183 of 21 December 1990, on assistance to the Palestinian people, in which it, inter alia, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people; requested the World Food Programme to provide food assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory; requested the international community, the organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to sustain and increase their assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); called for treatment on a transit basis of Palestinian exports and imports passing through neighbouring ports and points of exit and entry; also called for the granting of trade concessions and concrete preferential measures for Palestinian exports on the basis of Palestinian certificates of origin; reiterated its call for the implementation of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the projects mentioned in General Assembly resolution 39/223 of 18 December 1984; and requested the Secretary-General to report in full to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

3. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) wrote to the various concerned sources requesting information on the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution. Given below are the summaries of the replies received.

4. Any additional information received will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

II. REPLIES FROM THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. United Nations

1. United Nations Children's Fund

Introduction

5. UNICEF has been supporting programmes for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza since 1980. Assistance in the fields of health, pre-school and primary education, women's programmes, water supply and sanitation is provided in close cooperation with UNRWA and other relevant United Nations agencies. Emphasis has been placed on the reduction of infant mortality rates through improvements in primary health care and the promotion of health education for mothers and primary school children. Special attention has been given to the protection of children against the six vaccine-preventable diseases, control of diarrhoeal diseases, control of acute respiratory infections and promotion of safe delivery practices for mothers. Since the beginning of the Gulf crisis in August 1990, strenuous efforts have been made to sustain the above-mentioned programme. New programmes have also been planned to address the impact of the crisis.

Palestinians in Jordan

6. During the 1980s, UNICEF working in close cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), helped to achieve a considerable reduction in infant mortality rates. The infant mortality rate among Palestinians has fallen from 59 to 35 per 1,000 live births during the period 1980 to 1990. The main contributory factor to this reduction is UNICEF's promotion of child immunization, control of diarrhoeal diseases and control of acute respiratory infections. Immunization coverage levels for DPT3 and OPV3 were increased from 30 per cent in 1980 to 99 per cent in 1990. Coverage for measles was also increased to 90 per cent. Deaths arising from diarrhoeal diseases have been reduced from more than 3,000 per annum in the early 1980s to just 100 per year at present. UNICEF provided vaccines, syringes, cold chain equipment and oral rehydration salts. Other programmes supported by UNICEF include an income-generating programme for women and the provision of basic health education for mothers.

7. A new programme of cooperation for the period 1990-1994, approved by the 1990 UNICEF Executive Board, aims to sustain the gains made in the field of immunization, control of diarrhoeal disease and control of acute respiratory infections. It places increased emphasis on promoting safe motherhood so as to prevent and reduce disabilities among children. Two new programmes were also initiated. The first is an early childhood development programme which involves kindergarten teachers and parents in effective early educational stimulation of young children. The second programme is an action-oriented school health project in which teachers are trained to pass on vital health information to school children.

8. Under the regular programme, UNICEF continues to provide through UNRWA supplies and equipment for the immunization programme and ORS for control of diarrhoeal diseases. UNICEF supported the training of 100 UNRWA medical and paramedical staff with special emphasis on primary health care services, safe motherhood and early detection of disability. The comprehensive health education programme has reached over 85 per cent of women. Nutrition education classes to equip mothers with knowledge for better feeding of their children and families have been organized. A survey was conducted to find out the major causes of child morbidity and a medium-term campaign on prevention of disability was launched in November 1990.

9. Following the Gulf crisis, some 400,000 Palestinians have returned to Jordan. UNICEF supported a study on the impact of the crisis on women and children in Jordan. The study shows that: the percentage of families living below the poverty line has increased to 30 per cent of all families (i.e. 1 million Jordan/Palestinians); 5 per cent of the population (i.e. 150,000 people) are absolute poor; unemployment has surged beyond 30 per cent; anaemia and malnutrition among women and children are on the rise; over 40,000 students have returned from the Gulf and as a result the educational facilities and the health services are overstretched. Thus, the gains that Jordan had made in social services are now threatened. UNICEF has prepared a plan of action to minimize the adverse impact of the crisis on both Jordanian and Palestinian children. The plan includes support for nutrition, health, basic education, income generation and information retrieval programmes in the amount of $US 6.2 million.

Palestinians in the Syrian Arab Republic

10. As in the case of Jordan, UNICEF, in close collaboration with UNRWA, has contributed to progress in child survival. During the period 1984 to 1989, the infant mortality rate declined from 41 to 32 per 1,000 live births. Universal child immunization was attained several years ahead of the 1990 target date and has been successfully sustained. The majority of mothers have been made aware through an effective community education campaign on how to prevent dehydration during diarrhoeal diseases.

11. UNICEF supported a water supply and sanitation programme to provide clean water and a sewage network for 7,000 people. Pumps were also provided to increase water supply for an additional 6,000 people in 8 camps. UNICEF, in collaboration with GOPAR, the Syrian government agency responsible for Palestinians, has provided educational materials, basic equipment, furniture, and kindergarten teacher training in refugee camps.

12. In 1991, the Executive Board will have before it a new programme of assistance in the amount of $1.6 billion for the period 1991-1994, which includes assistance to: (a) health (immunization, control of diarrhoeal diseases and control of acute respiratory infections); (b) a women's development programme (which aims to reduce female illiteracy from 25 to 15 per cent, increase women's share in the labour force from 11 to 25 per cent and reduce neo-natal and maternal mortality and morbidity by 25 per cent by

1994); (c) early childhood development (which aims to upgrade the quality and increase access to early childhood stimulation.

13. In addition, UNICEF plans to address the problems arising from the Gulf crisis following the result of impact studies which are under way in the region.

West Bank and Gaza

14. UNICEF-supported activities during the 1980s were primarily in the field of child survival. In cooperation with UNRWA, UNICEF has helped to achieve and sustain universal child immunization and to promote the use of ORS. In recent years, UNICEF assistance has focused on the joint UNICEF/UNRWA physiotherapy programme which was set up to provide emergency assistance to children suffering from limb fractures sustained during the current situation.

15. A programme designed to minimize the impact of the Gulf crisis has recently been prepared. It provides for health assistance, including support for growth monitoring and well-baby clinics, child and maternal anaemia, control of diarrhoeal disease, control of acute respiratory infections and supplies of essential drugs. Funds for short-term credit for agricultural and industrial activities are also provided. The programme is now under review.

Palestinians in Lebanon

16. The UNICEF-sponsored Education for Peace Programme has played an important role in a country where, after 15 years of civil war, violence and destruction have become a way of life. In the summer of 1989 and again in 1990, camps were organized to bring together over 2,000 Palestinian children with Lebanese children from other backgrounds so that they may experience together the beauty of peaceful living and appreciate and learn from each other's experience.

17. Another focus of UNICEF support has been the rebuilding of the war-damaged water and sanitation infrastructure in Palestinian refugee camps in the Beirut area. In the Saida and Tyre camps the water supply system was repaired. In the Borj Al-Barajneh and Chatilla camps nine water tanks were installed and a potable water distribution system was set up. UNICEF, in close cooperation with UNRWA, also continues to provide vaccines required for Palestinian children. Literacy and income-generating activities have also received UNICEF support.

18. A plan of action to support women's development, early childhood stimulation and water supply and sanitation programmes has recently been prepared by the field office and is under consideration.

2. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

19. Pursuant to Conference resolutions 146 (VI) and 169 (VII) and the work programme of the UNCTAD secretariat for the biennium 1990-1991, the Special Economic Unit within the UNCTAD secretariat concentrated its work, during the period under review (July 1990-June 1991), on four main areas, namely: (a) monitoring and analysing policies and practices of Israeli occupation authorities that hamper economic development in the occupied Palestinian territory; (b) investigating the impact of such policies and practices on key economic sectors; (c) developing the database of the Unit, including the dissemination of relevant qualitative and quantitative information on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory; and (d) coordinating with and contributing to the relevant activities of the organizations of the United Nations system, pursuant to relevant General Assembly resolutions regarding assistance to the Palestinian people and economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory. In carrying out these activities, close consultations were maintained with Palestinian and other concerned authorities.

20. The forthcoming report of the UNCTAD secretariat to the Trade and Development Board at its thirty-eighth session monitors main developments in the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory during the period under review. It provides updated information on the impact of the Palestinian uprising and related Israeli measures on the aggregate and sectoral performance of the Palestinian economy. Special attention is given to the impact of the recent crisis on the Palestinian economy, with particular reference to the plight of Palestinian migrant workers, as well as the effects of the declining levels of remittances and transfers to the occupied Palestinian territory and continuing deficiencies in the domestic production base. The report also identifies feasible measures aimed at redressing the deterioriating economic situation.

21. The UNCTAD secretariat intensified work on the preparation of the intersectoral study entitled "The West Bank and Gaza Strip: prospects for sustained economic and social development". Within the overall frame of this study, 27 main sectors, subsectors and issues were identified for in-depth investigation. Detailed outlines were developed and 25 specific studies have been commissioned covering various economic and social sectors/issues. These include agriculture, industry, energy, housing, water resources, population and labour, transport, services, finance, education, health, public administration, social welfare services and others.

22. The outlines of these studies are structured in such a manner as to correspond to the three parts of the general outline established for the overall intersectoral study itself, namely, an analysis and assessment of economic and social developments over the past 24 years of occupation, an investigation of prospects for the future, and the formulation of a frame of reference for feasible strategies, policy options and measures for action. To the extent possible, these outlines of specific studies have been brought to the attention of the relevant organizations of the United Nations system with a view to coordinating efforts and soliciting their observations and possible

contributions. In view of the positive and encouraging responses received from the organizations contacted, the UNCTAD secretariat will endeavour to benefit from their expertise and promote further cooperation towards the completion of the intersectoral study, thus providing an integrated framework for planning the magnitude and direction of international assistance to the Palestinian people.

23. While embarking on the preparation of the in-depth specific studies, the UNCTAD secretariat has also initiated work on a conceptual/analytical framework which will provide technical guidelines for investigating, under different scenarios, future prospects in each economic and social field where a specific study is being prepared. The findings of the specific studies will be subsequently integrated into a substantive frame of reference outlining development prospects, strategies and policy options for action at various levels. Owing to the difficulties encountered as a result of the crisis in the region, the intersectoral study is now expected to be completed by the first semester of 1992. For further information on this activity, reference is made to the Secretary-General's report to the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/174 entitled "Living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory".

24. Work has been completed on the in-depth study of "Tourism and related activities in the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory". The study is now being finalized for publication. The study examines the performance of this sector prior to and since the Israeli occupation, including an analysis of the importance of tourism for the Palestinian economy. Emphasis has been focused on the factors that have constrained the performance of this sector up to 1987 and subsequently during the Palestinian uprising. Special attention is given to an assessment of its immediate outlook and needs for revival, including measures for immediate action. The prospects for the sustained growth and long-term development of the sector will be investigated separately within the frame of the overall intersectoral study. To the extent possible and where relevant, attempts have been made to coordinate these efforts with those of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), including consultations on substantive issues with the relevant staff of WTO.

25. During the period under review, the work of the secretariat on its database on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory culminated in the publication of the "Database extracts on economic issues and related Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip), January-December 1989" (UNCTAD/RDP/SEU/4). This is the fourth in the series of monitoring reports on economic and social issues and related Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory. Along with the previous issues, the document is intended to: (a) constitute a cumulative chronology of major developments and related issues which dominate economic activities in the occupied Palestinian territory; (b) serve as a useful cumulative source of reference for further investigation of the issues concerned; and (c) supplement both quantitative and qualitative information and analysis contained in the reports and studies undertaken by the UNCTAD secretariat on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory.

26. Work was intensified on the structuring of the statistical series in the UNCTAD secretariat's database on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory in line with the Economic Time Series in use at the UNCTAD secretariat. This entailed the identification of data sources, followed by the classification, entry, verification and tabulation of available series for the period 1968-1987, covering national income accounts, balance of payments, external merchandise trade, population and labour force. Apart from serving as a consolidated source of quantitative information on the Palestinian economy for over 20 years of the occupation period, the new statistical series also provides the basis for the UNCTAD secretariat's present task of assessing future growth trends and establishing targets under different scenarios, in connection with the preparation of the overall intersectoral study, mentioned above.

27. In line with work programme requirements and coupled with the provisions of resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly during the period under review, the UNCTAD secretariat has intensified efforts to strengthen coordination and cooperation with an increasing number of the United Nations organizations, international non-governmental organizations and others involved in work on and/or concerned with the economic and social situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory. This included the dispatch of missions to Amman, Cairo and Tunis. Regarding access to the occupied Palestinian territory by the staff of the UNCTAD secretariat, the Israeli occupation authorities have not yet responded to the latest request of UNCTAD on the matter.

3. United Nations Development Programme

28. In response to General Assembly resolution 45/183, as well as other relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the UNDP Governing Council, the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People has been expanded considerably. In 1990, estimated delivery figures for development assistance in the occupied Palestinian territories increased to approximately $US 11 million, as compared to a rate of delivery of $3.8 million in 1989.

29. In preparing for future assistance to the Palestinian people during the period 1992-1996, the UNDP Governing Council, at its special session in February 1991, increased by 25 per cent the level of resources available to the Programme of Assistance (from $12-$15 million). As a result, the level of central resources for the Palestinian people is greater than funds earmarked by UNDP for over 90 other countries and territories.

30. With supplemental funding provided by other donor Governments and organizations, now including the Arab Gulf Fund for United Nations Development Organizations, Canada, Greece, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Tunisia, and the United States of America, UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People has been active for over a decade. Since its inception in 1980, the UNDP

Governing Council has allocated $40.5 million to this activity, including the 1992-1996 allocation, and over $22 million has been provided in supplemental funding.

31. Current and future activities of PAPP will focus on opportunities for Palestinian entrepreneurship and employment, environmental concerns and human development. In 1990 the Administrator of UNDP announced the designation of a Special Representative to have overall responsibility for UNDP activities in the occupied Palestinian territories. He will take up these responsibilities in early 1991.

4. United Nations Environment Programme

32. UNEP, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, located in Alexandria, Egypt, has a project entitled "Training course on water supply, sanitation and health for environmental health officers working with the Palestinian people". The long-term objective of the project is to improve the quality of the drinking water supply, sanitation and food hygiene so as to contribute to the control of diarrhoeal and other water-borne diseases in Palestinian refugee camps. The short-term objective is to facilitate training in pollution control and sound management of environment-related diseases in the Palestinian refugee camps and settlements. The project was initiated in February 1989 and is expected to run through June 1991. UNEP's contribution is approximately $US 30,000 in cash while WHO contributes $15,000, in kind.

33. Two training courses have so far been held in Amman, Jordan, from 5 to 16 November 1989 and 10 to 21 February 1990. As a result, 36 environmental officers have been trained out of about 122 in the four fields of UNRWA. A manual, in Arabic and English, on water supply and sanitation has also been prepared and field tested; 300 copies in each of the two languages will be published shortly. Evaluation of the impact of the project on camp conditions and the performance of trained environmental health officers is being carried out and a report will be available by June 1991. Future activities and follow-up will depend on the evaluation mission's recommendations.

5. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Introduction

34. In 1991, UNRWA is continuing to provide education, health, relief and social services and other humanitarian assistance to eligible Palestine refugees in its five fields of operation, namely, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the occupied territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In addition, emergency measures are being carried on in Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A full account of UNRWA's activities can be found in the Commissioner-General's report to the General Assembly. 1/ The following is a

brief summary of the Agency's present activities in the occupied territory. An indication of the level of UNRWA's assistance to the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza is provided by the budget figures. In 1988, the first full year of the intifadah, UNRWA's combined regular and emergency budget for the occupied territory was $US 112 million. The equivalent figure for the present year is $135 million. In addition to the regular and emergency budgets, about $30 million has been pledged or received since 1988 on the expanded programme of assistance referred to in paragraph 42 below, bringing UNRWA's resources for the occupied territory over the period 1988-1991 to some $518 million.

Education

35. The objective of the Agency's education programme is to provide, within the framework of the host countries' prescribed school curricula, general education at the elementary and preparatory levels, as well as teacher and higher education and vocational and technical education for Palestine refugees in accordance with their educational needs, identity and cultural heritage. The programme operates with technical assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In the 1990-1991 school year, the Agency has more than 135,000 pupils enrolled in 247 schools in the occupied territory and is providing training for more than 1,700 vocational and teacher trainees in its four training centres. The three training centres in the West Bank, which were under extended closure by military order from December 1987, were authorized to reopen in spring 1990. At the outset of the Gulf war, however, the West Bank Training Centres and the Gaza Training Centre were closed by military order and were allowed to reopen only in the second half of March 1991. Schools in the occupied territory are now open but throughout the period of the intifadah have been severely disrupted by strikes, curfews, disturbances and closure orders imposed by the Israeli authorities.

Health

36. The UNRWA health programme comprises curative and preventive care services, environmental health services in camps and distribution of food supplements to vulnerable groups. The programme operates with technical assistance from WHO. The continuation of the intifadah and the counter-measures employed by the Israeli security forces have affected UNRWA health services in the occupied territory. The Agency has had to give priority to emergency and casualty care provided in the camps (described in para. 40 below), while at the same time maintaining its regular health activities in all areas, in spite of interruption caused by curfews, strikes, disturbances and the declaration of certain areas as closed military zones.

37. Besides continuing these services, UNRWA's health programme is focusing on the implementation of a number of new strategies in 1991, including prophylaxis and treatment of nutritional anaemia (which is highly prevalent among women of child-bearing age and children), management of growth-retardation in children, control of diabetes mellitus, improved

maternal health, development of human resources for health, provision of equipment to and improvement of blood-transfusion facilities in the non-governmental organization hospitals in the occupied territory and the initiation of a project for building, equipping and commissioning a 200-bed hospital in Gaza at a cost of $US 35 million, $20 million of which represents capital cost and $15 million operating costs for the first three years.

Relief and social services

38. The relief and social services programme provides support to the neediest among the Palestine refugees - "special hardship cases" - and facilitates self-reliance. The programme consists of assistance to special hardship cases, social case work, income-generation and related skill training, women's programmes, rehabilitation of the disabled and assistance to refugees in emergency situations.

39. These activities are continuing in 1991. In view of the deterioration of the socio-economic situation in UNRWA's area of operations, the number of special hardship cases will be increased Agency-wide by 7 per cent. Emphasis is being placed on setting up small group enterprises to provide employment, especially for women from special hardship families and the disabled. The community-based rehabilitation programme for the disabled is continuing and a review of its development to date will be the basis of a joint UNRWA-NGO discussion of future strategy in 1991. In the occupied territory, projects will be developed, aiming at the vocational rehabilitation of disabled, in particular former breadwinners injured during the intifadah.

Extraordinary measures

40. In response to the additional needs created by the intifadah and the Israeli responses, UNRWA introduced a programme of extraordinary measures which, beginning in early 1988, have been extended through 1989, 1990 and 1991. The large number of casualties resulting from the intifadah has led to a considerable expansion of the emergency medical programme. Five clinics in Gaza now remain open 24 hours a day and the remainder open in two shifts, while 16 clinics run double shifts in the West Bank. Additional medical supplies and equipment, including health buses for the evacuation of casualties, have been purchased and the payment of hospital costs and subsidies has been increased. In addition, medical specialists (including orthopaedic surgeons) have been provided and a physiotherapy programme is being run in conjunction with UNICEF and Médicins sans Frontières in six clinics in Gaza and five in the West Bank.

41. Welfare services have been expanded to assist the families of those killed, disabled or detained and to cope with the far-reaching socio-economic effects of the intifadah. Additional food is being provided to needy people in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and needy families have received cash grants. Distribution of food was particularly important during the prolonged curfews imposed by the Israeli authorities during the Gulf war. Foodstuffs

have been distributed to 295,000 families. Other emergency measures taken include the provision of food supplements to 38,000 additional beneficiaries. Finally, the Agency's extraordinary measures in the occupied territory include a programme of general assistance and protection. The major component of this programme is the placing of 12 international staff members in the West Bank and 9 in the Gaza Strip as refugee affairs officers. These staff members have facilitated Agency operations in the difficult prevailing circumstances and have assisted the refugee population in their day-to-day life. The refugee affairs officers have helped, by their presence, to lower tensions, especially during confrontations with the security forces, and to prevent maltreatment of the refugees, especially vulnerable groups such as women and children.

Expanded programme of assistance

42. In 1988, UNRWA launched an expanded programme of assistance comprised of projects to improve living conditions in the occupied territory. A target working figure of $US 65 million was set for a period of three years, of which approximately $30 million has been received or pledged by March 1991. A high priority in the expanded programme of assistance is to ensure that refugees living in the 27 camps of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have decent shelter and a sanitary environment. Accordingly, substantial efforts are being made to repair and rebuild refugee shelters and to upgrade the quality of rehabilitation. The Agency will also continue to improve camp infrastructure, primary health care facilities including the building and equipping of additional health centres, interhal sewage systems and integration of camp water and sewage schemes within municipal and regional systems.

6. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Israeli land and water policies and practices

43. ESCWA is currently updating its information on the issues covered in the study prepared on Israeli land and water policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories as requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/53.

Agriculture and development in Western Asia

44. ESCWA's recurrent publication entitled Agriculture and Development in Western Asia, No. 14 for 1991, will include papers on the impact of Israeli water policies on agriculture and the impact of Jewish immigration on agriculture and the rural population in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Other studies

45. A study on prospects for rural development in the occupied territories was finalized in December and will shortly be distributed. In addition, a feasibility study will be conducted in 1991 on establishing a centre for

production and training related to livestock. Lastly, ESCWA expects to complete within two months a study on the impact of the Gulf crisis on the occupied Palestinian territories.

7. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

46. Pursuant to resolution 12/11 of the Commission on Human Settlements, entitled "Housing conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories", UNCHS (Habitat) has prepared a report on a national housing development strategy for the Palestinian people. Paragraph 10 of that resolution requested the Executive Director "to devise a national housing development strategy to the year 2000 for the Palestinian people based on the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, in cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, including the housing requirements of a future independent Palestinian State and to submit this report to the Commission at its thirteenth session". The report, which is entitled "Housing requirements of the Palestinian people: report of the Executive Director" (HS/C/13/2/Add.1) will be submitted to the Commission on Human Settlements at its thirteenth session (Harare, 29 April to 8 May 1991).

8. World Food Programme

47. The Executive Director has approved the implementation of project PAL 4468/Q entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied territories" which targets the most needy Palestinians in the occupied territories, who have particularly no means of earning a living because of the prevailing conditions and therefore are unable to satisfy their basic food needs. The hospitals and similar institutions serving the disabled, aged people and orphans have been among the first to suffer from budgetary stringencies and unless food can be obtained from external sources, patients cannot be fed. This quick-action project will contribute to overcome this grave situation as a first step to a possibly larger programme of assistance.

B. Specialized agencies

1. International Labour Organisation

48. ILO is pursuing its efforts with a view to implementing and developing its technical assistance programme in the occupied Arab territories. Its current projects concern vocational training, trade union training and rehabilitation of handicapped persons.

49. Furthermore, the Director-General of ILO is making the necessary arrangements for the preparation of his annual report on the situation of the Arab workers of the occupied Arab territories to be submitted to the forthcoming International Labour Conference in June 1991. The

Director-General is sending two missions to the region, one to the Arab countries and the other to Israel and the occupied Arab territories in order to collect the latest available information on the subject.

2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

50. At its twenty-fifth session in November 1989, the FAO Conference adopted resolution 1/89 entitled "Provision of technical assistance to the Palestinian people", requesting the Director-General, inter alia, to send a study mission to the occupied Palestinian territory, and to organize a symposium on the Palestinian agricultural sector.

51. In response to this resolution, the Director-General submitted a report to the FAO Council at its ninety-eighth session in November 1990. The Council expressed the following views:

> "The Council noted with satisfaction that progress had been achieved in the implementation of Conference resolution 1/89 entitled 'Provision of Technical Assistance to the Palestinian People' and expressed its appreciation to the Director-General for the steps which he had taken, in particular with respect to sending a mission to study and evaluate the situation of the agricultural sector in the occupied territory. It confirmed that the mission should proceed on the basis of the action taken by the Director-General. The Council requested that the symposium envisaged in Conference resolution 1/89 be organized soon. It was hoped that the results of the mission would be included in the agenda of the symposium but the convening of the symposium should not be linked to the sending of the mission. The symposium could take place in Rome."

52. The Director-General will report to the FAO Conference at its twenty-sixth session in November 1991 on the implementation of the two activities envisaged by the resolution.

3. International Fund for Agricultural Development

53. The Fund's rules and procedures do not provide for extending the assistance called for in General Assembly resolution 45/183. Article 2 of the Agreement establishing IFAD states that "the objectives of the Fund shall be to mobilize additional resources to be made available on concessional terms for development in developing member States".

4. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

54. Since the third session of its General Conference (November 1989), UNIDO has focused on the following activities for technical assistance to the Palestinian people:

Assistance for the establishment of a vegetable grading and packing house

55. In response to the request of UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNIDO sent a mission to the occupied territories to examine the possibility of establishing a vegetable grading and packing house to be used mainly for exports from the Gaza Strip to countries of the European Economic Community (EEC). As a result, a technical report was prepared and submitted to UNDP in December 1989. It contains advice on the feasibility of a vegetable grading and packing facility for direct exports from the Gaza Strip.

Assistance to the plastics industry

56. A project document, which was prepared by UNIDO, is still under consideration by UNDP. The objective of the assistance is to establish a plastics testing laboratory in the occupied territories.

Training course in pharmaceutical and chemical industries

57. Negotiations are under way with the Turin Centre of ILO to undertake this training course. It has been agreed recently that details of implementation have to be worked out in the near future. UNDP is expected to finance this activity.

58. The final report on the UNIDO seminar on obstacles to and prospects for the Palestinian industrial sector, held in Vienna in October 1989, which contained the seminar's recommendations for further assistance, was distributed in March 1990. At the same time, discussions were held with representatives of Palestine, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), ESCWA and the UNDP office in Jerusalem on ways and means of implementing those recommendations. It was agreed in principle that these organizations may meet this year to discuss the matter.

59. Close cooperation and coordination with other United Nations agencies and organizations have been pursued, particularly with regard to the issuance of the bulletin "West Bank and Gaza Update", which is covering the needs of these organizations in support of the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, UNIDO took part in the last inter-agency meeting, held at Geneva in May 1990, which dealt with ways and means of responding to the social and economic needs of the Palestinian people.

60. UNIDO's Industrial Development Board (IDB) held its seventh session from 5 to 9 November 1990. A report on UNIDO's technical assistance to the Palestinian people was submitted by the secretariat and was discussed at the session. As a result, a decision was adopted requesting UNIDO to sustain and increase its assistance to the Palestinian people and to undertake a number of activities, including cooperation with relevant United Nations bodies, in the efforts aimed at the establishment of a marketing centre for Palestinian industrial products.

5. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

61. With regard to the matters raised in General Assembly resolution 45/183, GATT wishes to draw attention to the following provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

(a) Article V of GATT, concerning freedom of transit, is aimed at ensuring that goods in transit through the territories of contracting parties are not subject to delays and restrictions and are exempt from customs duties and other charges, except charges commensurate with administrative expenses or with the cost of services rendered. It should be noted, however, that these obligations apply only in respect of traffic in transit to or from contracting parties. Any contracting party is, however, free to extend such benefits to countries other than contracting parties.

(b) In respect of preferential treatment of exports, GATT wishes to point out that the decision of 28 November 1979 of the Contracting Parties on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries (the so-called Enabling Clause) provides that developed contracting parties to GATT may accord preferential tariff treatment - and in certain circumstances preferential treatment with respect to non-tariff measures - to products originating in developing countries in accordance with the Generalized System of Preferences. The selection of developing countries that would benefit from such preferences is a matter to be decided by each preference-granting Government.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/45/13).

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION
ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE
TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES
BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND
THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
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II. REPLIES FROM THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

B. Specialized agencies

World Health Organization

Special technical support

1. For many years the World Health Organization (WHO) has provided support and assistance for the population of the occupied Arab territories in order to improve their health conditions. In 1989, its member States considered it essential to intensify this assistance and requested the Director General to take all necessary steps in order to implement the World Health Assembly resolutions related to the health conditions of the population in the occupied Arab territories. A technical support programme for improving health conditions was prepared in October 1989, and in February 1990 a Medical Officer was put in charge of its implementation.

2. On the basis of the programme elaborated in October 1989, about 45 project proposals have been received from Palestinian humanitarian, charitable and medical organizations and from public and charitable hospitals, requesting WHO collaboration in:

(a) Improving primary health care by reorganizing the primary health care network, creating or strengthening units of rehabilitation and physiotherapy, procuring medical equipment for primary health care centres and providing transport facilities for mobile clinics;

(b) Providing medical equipment to the charitable hospitals, creating new hospital units and reorganizing the transport system;

(c) Creating and developing mental health centres;

(d) Providing fellowships and organizing training for doctors and nurses, locally and abroad.

3. The response of WHO was to make a very detailed and thorough technical evaluation of the proposals submitted and to work out with the cooperating institution project profiles for the identification of donors.

4. In July 1990, 34 project proposals costing an estimated $US 11,269,000 were included in an appeal to donors from the Director General. The appeal resulted in financial contributions from several countries, totalling $US 4,500,000, channelled either through WHO or directly to the institutions concerned. Ten projects were implemented by WHO, totalling $US 2,100,000; several others, totalling $US 2,400,000 have been implemented or are currently being implemented by the United Nations bodies present in the occupied Arab territories (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) and by non-governmental organizations in collaboration with Palestinian institutions. An account of the status of progress and implementation of the projects included in the appeal by the Director General is available. Many of them have yet to be funded.

5. To respond to the new health needs arising from the Gulf crisis, a new appeal was made by the Director General in September 1990 for aid to the charitable hospitals in the occupied Arab territories. Several donors responded positively. The assistance pledged or received as a result of this appeal is about $US 1,500,000, most of it for the partial covering of operating expenses, medical and surgical equipment and assistance to the charitable hospitals on the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, the Commission of the European Communities has pledged $US 6,000,000 to be channelled through the Netherlands Red Cross Society and is to be implemented in cooperation with charitable institutions in response to the Director General's appeal.

6. Whatever the method of financing of the health facilities in the occupied Arab territories, the WHO medical officer in Jerusalem continues to coordinate the implementation of the special technical programme, working as a technical adviser in the health field with all the parties concerned.

WHO collaborating centres in the occupied territories

7. Initially set up to strengthen the local capability for operational research on primary health care, the centres have seen their functions change substantially over the years, depending on the extent of their integration with the existing health services, the availability of human and financial resources and other intrinsic factors such as the cohesiveness of the technical committees guiding them or extrinsic factors such as the security of the environment in which they operate.

8. Since 1988, when WHO evaluated the operation of the centres, each has developed in its own way and has had to face slightly different difficulties. Their present situation is summarized below.

WHO Collaborating Centre for Primary Health Care Research, Gaza

9. Initially set up within the pre-existing health structures in 1985, this centre has maintained and even strengthened its institutional and technical links with the health services in Gaza. A number of its staff have responsibilities both within the Gaza health system and within the WHO centre. There are two staff members concerned with technical and administrative matters. The Director is the Chairman of the Management Board, which meets once a month to evaluate research proposals and the preliminary results of surveys.

10. The scientific quality of this centre's work is good. The projects are selected according to their relevance to everyday health problems, and have a real impact on the development of the health strategies and standards applied in the Gaza Strip.

11. The attitude of the community and its leaders to the centre seems to be positive. The centre has established working relations with non-governmental organizations and with the UNRWA health centres. It has scientific and technical relations with outside academic institutions.

12. Finally, the centre produces a monthly epidemiological bulletin that is noteworthy for the quality of its presentation and for its content.

WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Primary Health Care in Ramallah

13. This centre was set up in 1985. It had readier access to the international scientific community at a time when travel within and outside the territory was relatively easy. All this has changed since the start of the intifadah. The operational and logistic difficulties have been accentuated by irregular administrative and financial support. The rental for the premises accommodating the two Ramallah centres and some project costs totalling $US 623,000 for the period May 1985 until June 1991 were paid by WHO; the WHO funds are channelled through UNDP, which has an administrative unit in Jerusalem.

WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Development of Human Resources in Ramallah

14. This centre was set up with the intention of revitalizing training and of setting up mechanisms for the projection of staff needs and for coordinating and training staff in the territories or abroad.

15. Up to now the centre has had only very limited activities and its constraints are largely the same as those described for the Collaborating Centre for Research on Primary Health Care. Specific constraints are the lack of specialist staff, irregular financial support and a general working climate unfavourable to medium-term or long-term planning. Nevertheless, the centre has managed during the past year to arrange the training abroad of six specialists in diabetes (financed by WHO) and to organize a course on information technology.

Conclusion

16. This report gives rise to certain reflections on measures essential to ensure improvements in the health conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories. It shows the efforts of WHO in this domain to respond to World Health Assembly resolutions. These efforts have been reinforced during the past year.

17. The appeals of the Director General have resulted in support from the donor community. This support will undoubtedly continue in the future.

18. After one year of operation in the occupied Arab territories, the WHO programme is entering a new phase in the strengthening of primary health care institutions; WHO will increase its efforts through the existing mechanisms.

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II. REPLIES FROM ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. United Nations

Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna

At its thirty-fifth session, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted a draft resolution entitled "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women" and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for adoption. At its first regular session of 1991, the Council adopted it as resolution 1991/19, which constitutes the mandate for the Centre's future activities on behalf of Palestinian women.

B. Specialized agencies

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

In accordance with decision 4.2.1. adopted by the Executive Board at its 134th session, in September 1990 the Director-General launched an appeal to member States and foundations to contribute to the special fund opened at UNESCO in order to provide fellowships for students from the occupied territories. He also launched an appeal to 89 universities linked to the United Nations network "to grant research and further training fellowships to Palestinian researchers and lecturers in the various areas of science and technology". The Novosibirsk State University (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and the University of Khartoum (Sudan) have offered fellowships. An amount of $US 183,960 has so far been allocated under UNESCO's Participation Programme for 1990-1991 to enable some 22 Palestinians to study at universities abroad.